

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 L-03 H-03 SS-15 NSC-10 RSR-01

/081 W

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R 131602Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 622

INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6556

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SGEN, NI

SUBJECT: PRESS HARASSMENT CASE STILL SIMMERING

REF: LAGOS 6446, A-177

1. PRESS STILL SEEKING SATISFACTION IN CASE OF DETENTION AND BEATING JOURNALIST MINERE AMAKIRI IN PORT HARCOURT TWO WEEKS AGO (REFS), WITH SEVERAL PAPERS COMING CLOSER TO EXPLICIT SECONDING OF EXPRESS CALL (REFTEL) FOR REMOVAL OF RIVERS STATE GOVERNOR DIETE-SPIFF. TIMES, FOR EXAMPLE, CLAIMED IN EDITORIAL THAT CIVIL SERVANTS AND OTHERS IN RSG ALSO SUBJECTED TO ARBITRARY BEATINGS THROUGH "WHIMS AND CAPRICES OF POWERS-THAT-BE" AND ASKED WHETHER "TYRANNY" EXISTS IN RIVERS STATE.
2. RSG BROKE SILENCE WITH EDITORIAL AUGUST 11 IN STATE-OWNED WEEKLY ALLEGING THAT AMAKIRI NOT ARRESTED AND BEATEN FOR ANYTHING HE HAD WRITTEN. PAPER OFFERED NO EXPLANATION FOR NEWSMAN'S DETENTION, ONLY REMARKING AMBIGUOUSLY "WE DEFEND NO NIGERIAN WHO WILLFULLY KNOCKS HIS HEAD AGAINST AUTHORITIES AND PARADES HIMSELF AS ABOVE LAWS OF NATION."

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3. GOWON REFUSED DISCUSS AMAKIRI CASE AT PRESS

CONFERENCE ON HIS RETURN FROM OTTAWA, TELLING REPORTERS THAT "IT IS MATTER BETWEEN YOU AND RSG. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING, GO TO PORT HARCOURT." ONE SFVRKM OFFICIAL HAS TOLD US, HOWEVER, THAT GOWON IS "COMPLETELY FED UP" WITH DIETE-SPIFF.

4. COMMENT: WITH GOWON'S RETURN, FMG INTERNAL DISCUSSION OF AMAKIRI CASE AND DIETE-SPIFF'S FUTURE EXPECTED TO SHIFT INTO HIGH GEAR. GOWON'S TESTINESS AT AIRPORT AND INDICATIONS HE IS "FED UP" WITH DIETE-SPIFF SUGGEST GOVERNOR'S TRANSFER WILL CERTAINLY BE EXPLORED AS POSSIBLE SOLUTION, THOUGH FOR REASONS CITED REFS FMG MAY YET FIND THIS TOO AWKWARD POLITICALLY. PRESS CRITICISM LIKELY CONTINUE UNTIL SOME SATISFACTION OBTAINED FROM RSG OR FMG, EVEN IF ONLY ASSURANCE THAT "JUSTICE" WILL BE DONE.
REINHARDT

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